COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT

A scene from the movie *Beautiful Creatures*, directed by Richard LaGravenese.

Beautiful Creatures

MOVIE REVIEW

Harry Potter meets *Twilight* in *Beautiful Creatures*, a supernatural romance in the South

By Grace Young and Zeren Aksu

Beautiful Creatures is the story of two teenagers, one supernatural and one mortal, whose destinies are intertwined. They dream of each other months before actually meeting, and fall in love at first sight. But they must fight a battle and learn about each other's family histories before their relationship can succeed.

Mysterious and mischievous, the supernatural Lena is the new girl in a close-knit, Bible-belt town in South Carolina. She lives with her "uncle" in a gorgeous, run-down, Gothic mansion that is genuinely haunted. Mortal Ethan is an adorable high school track star who occasionally wears hipster glasses. From the start of the film, you can tell he is not a run-of-the-mill jock: he has wacko dreams about a lovely, yet scary, dark-haired girl (Lena), takes nightly runs to the graveyard to visit his mother's grave, and very ungracefully dumps the prettiest girl in high school (not Lena) at the start of the film.

Ethan may not be a run-of-the-mill jock, but his soon-to-be sweetheart, Lena, is not even a run-of-the-mill human. She reveals to him almost immediately that she has special powers, including being able to blow windows out of classrooms, light up a room with poetry, and change the weather with her mind. This doesn't deter Ethan, who is head-over-heels in love with her, no matter what she says or does.

Lena learns that her grandmother accidentally cursed her lineage.

Sitting on a lush grassy hill on a sunny day, Lena confides to Ethan her terrible predicament. When she turns sixteen (which would be happening in just a few short weeks), her powers will be claimed for either good or evil. The worst part of the predicament is that Lena has no say in the matter. In addition, she's an especially powerful witch because her birthday falls on a solstice.

But that's not all! When Ethan and Lena touch an antique locket at the same time, something happens ... and Lena learns that her grandmother accidentally cursed her lineage. She freaks out upon realizing this, but Ethan is there for comfort. He puts his arm around her and takes her to the library, where they discover a secret vault with a book describing how Lena can break the curse.

At this point, a *Cliff Notes* would be handy. The relationships between people become confusing, but the trite plot continues to develop rather predictably.

★★☆☆☆

Beautiful Creatures

Directed by Richard LaGravenese

Rated PG-13

Now playing

INTERVIEW

A conversation with Alden Ehrenreich and Alice Englert

By Grace Young
ARTS EDITOR

The main actors in *Beautiful Creatures*, Alice Englert and Alden Ehrenreich (characters Lena Duchannes and Ethan Lawson Wate in the movie), visited Boston at the end of January for interviews with the press. British stalwarts Jeremy Irons and Emma Thompson played supporting roles in the movie, but regrettably did not make the press tour. Nevertheless, it was fun to meet the young stars. They were entertaining, energetic, articulate, and as endearing as their characters the movie. Gone were the Southern accents from the movie (Englert has a soft New Zealand accent, while Ehrenreich, an NYU alum, speaks with your basic Midwestern accent), and both seemed relaxed during our short interview. Ehrenreich had his feet on the table at one point, and Englert was eating strawberries and doodling on a Ritz Carlton notepad. Here are some of their thoughts:

- Are they in a real relationship *à la Twilight*? "No," exclaimed Ehrenreich, while Englert politely said they were just friends.
- Both realize *Beautiful Creatures* will inevitably be compared to *Twilight*, but consider it more of a *Harry Potter* for the *Twilight* demographic.
- Ehrenreich was attracted to the role because of the "recklessness and determination" of Ethan's character.
- Both said working with Emma Thompson, Jeremy Irons, and Viola Adkins was "amazing," "like free acting lessons."

The actors were entertaining, energetic, and endearing.

- One reporter asked if they thought the film would make books "sexy" for teenagers, because the characters bond over their love of literature in the film. Ehreneich replied confidently, but somewhat sarcastically, "we're going to make reading sexy." However, he also noted that not all of the books mentioned in the film are appropriate for children (for example, Charles Bukowski's profanity-soaked novels). "I found literature very sexy when I was younger, because no one wanted to go out with me," said Englert, which was rather difficult to believe.

COURTESY OF THE MFA

New painting unveiled at the MFA

Gerrit van Honthorst's oil on canvas ***Triumph of the Winter Queen: Allegory of the Just*** *(1636)* was unveiled this Valentine's Day for the 400th wedding anniversary of Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick V, known as the "Winter King and Queen" due to their short reigns as monarchs of Bohemia.

The "Winter Queen" rides a chariot drawn by three lions, surrounded by her husband and thirteen children. Recently restored, the colossal 10-inch by 15-inch masterpiece is accompanied by a media presentation exploring the symbolic elements of the painting and the histories of the people it portrays.

On display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Loring Gallery, Feb. 14, 2013 – Jul. 21, 2013.

— Angelique Nehmzow